

The Gospel as Myth

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Many people of religious faith take for granted that their belief in a crucified and risen savior is faith in a historical person, usually of divine origin, usually of virgin birth or immaculate conception. However the evidence I will present in this document seems to point to the contrary--that stories of crucified and risen saviors ([there were many](#)) dying for the sins of humanity have origins in myth[1]. Such stories had value to the ancient people that created them, but those people knew the stories to be just stories, perhaps embellishments of people that actually lived, but in virtually all cases such stories of god-saviors are empirically fictional (few people believe Prometheus, Mithra, or Inanna were real people even though myths and legends tell of their death, descent to the underworld, and resurrection for the sins of humanity).

Unfortunately, so much time has passed since the inception of such mythical stories that modern day people do not understand how ancient people thought, how and why the authors of such stories invented them, and why such stories have in some cases blossomed into widespread religions practiced by many today-- not because of divine intervention, but because of historical events, military and political factors, the human psyche's spiritual thirst, and the [evolutionary development of religious thought](#) that helped with natural selection and tribal survival during human evolution[2]).

Consider the following passage to see an interesting parallel between ancient mythology, the early Church, and the christian gospel-- notice how in this passage we have the early Church time period, a fantastical story[3] involving a holy person (Saint Genevieve), written by a holy person (an unnamed monk; compare the fact that the New Testament gospels are also written by unnamed authors), and this fantastical story was unchallenged at the time even though the story is very improbable:

"In 520 A.D. an anonymous monk recorded the life of Saint Genevieve, who had died only ten years before that. In his account of her life, he describes how, when she ordered a cursed tree cut down, monsters sprang from it and breathed a fatal stench on many men for two hours; while she was sailing, eleven ships capsized, but at her prayers they were righted again spontaneously; she cast out demons, calmed storms, miraculously created water and oil from nothing before astonished crowds, healed the blind and lame, and several people who stole things from her actually went blind instead." [4]

The above passage certainly illustrates how mythology was used by the early Church, and was at least tolerated if not believed by people and early Church leaders, in a time before science and critical thinking and the scientific method, in an age of illiteracy, where superstition was common--a rustling in the dark woods was believed caused by spirits and demons, an era when the mentally ill were thought to be so as a result of demonic possession, and when illness was thought to be caused by the wrath of gods instead of microbial pathogens and pathophysiology.

Many Christians also take for granted that their New Testament (gospels and letters) of the bible is the sole record of their savior and the early christian Church. Actually, the New Testament (and the entire bible) is a compendium of many 'books' or documents. In the days of the early Church, when the New Testament gospels were written (40-70+ years after the alleged time of Jesus), there were more than fifty other gospel stories written about Jesus-- stories that often contradict the existing New Testament stories; gospels denying a physical, fleshly Jesus; gospels denying a resurrected Jesus; stories of a Jesus who was human and not divine, positing a Jesus who taught that salvation came from within, not from belief in him nor a God; such gospels were uncovered in Nag Hammadi Egypt in 1945 with their translation completed by 1980; the [Nag Hammadi library](#) consists of thirteen ancient codices that contain more than 50 texts, including other gospel stories about

Jesus such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, and more[5].



[Nag Hammadi fragment]

A natural question that should arise in the minds of those of rational thought: "Why didn't these other gospel stories get included in the New Testament as we know it?" The answer to that is complex, involving religion and politics of ancient times. Essentially an elite group of religious leaders, under the auspices of the roman emperor Constantine and the political and military might of the Roman empire, decided to consolidate what they believed to be the only true gospel stories in order to unify the empire and its people and in so doing avoid strife among the people, who at the time were already worshipping varied saviors and varied christian belief systems based on the variety of circulating gospel stories. The earliest christians during the first two centuries did not believe in a physical, historical Jesus, but rather believed in a spiritual mythical Jesus; it was only when the early Roman Church bishops decided to unify the people under one religion that a physical, real Jesus was invented and propogated in dogma; early Church leaders then waged a campaign to wipe out all evidence of early church beliefs in a non-physical mythical mystical Jesus, including persecuting any christians who did not believe in an actual Jesus (witness the Nicene creed, and the statement most christians are required to make in church for membership, attesting to belief in a real Jesus)[6].

To a Christian, what I will present here are some compelling facts that are quite shocking at first, namely (1) [Jesus never existed](#), and (2) almost every event and character from the christian gospel story is a [retelling of ancient hero-savior myths](#) that have existed throughout all of time (including the virgin birth of a divine god-Hero, the Hero's quests, the working of miracles, wise sayings, crucifixion/death, descent to hell, and resurrection/rebirth).

Now to a Christian, being presented with the savior-hero myth as an alternative reality to their christian belief system may be very threatening to say the least, and perhaps shocking to one's belief in a secure solution to the fear of death and non-existance upon death. But, once the mythological nature of the christian message is reconciled with, as a result of careful inspection of the evidence that shows the message to be myth, a calm can ensue as one realizes a life built on reason, compassion, and rational thought, rather than belief in fearful gods, an omnipresent Voyeur, and the need to adhere to ancient codes of morality in fact invented by men; the believer who casts away beliefs in ancient legends and blood sacrifices is free to exercise a life built on reason, is free to formulate an ethical and moral life based on studies of philosophy and philosophers [7] (who argued for their posited codes of ethics and morals based on reason rather than threats of hellfire and torment[8]), and the former believer can now cherish a mortal life and their loved ones as mortal beings, ephermal yet valued. Indeed, a common fear or cry of religious people, such as Christians, is that without religion a person will become immoral; but such a belief is just unfounded[9], when one sees that most of the evil and cruelty of history has been committed over religious differences[10]; and the alleged wise sayings of Divine holy men, e.g. Jesus, are not always as wise as non-religious wise sayings (as an example, consider the Golden Rule allegedly said by Jesus-- "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Well, should I offer meat to a vegetarian, because I would want meat? Perhaps the Platinum Rule, not of religious origin is better-- "do unto others as they would have you do unto them"; that makes a lot more sense, and is even a wiser statement than what Jesus said. So you see, religion and alleged messiahs do not always have the upper hand or exclusivity on being wise, even

philosophers and atheists and pagans have wise sayings and codes of ethics to contemplate.)

Perhaps the most compelling of all reasons for disbelieving christianity is that the christian gospel story seems to simply be a story retold from a plot and cast of characters that long preceeded Jesus. A passage by passage analysis of the New Testament gospel story reveals that there really is little original in the gospel story of Jesus. For centuries and millenia prior to the time of the alleged Jesus Christ, there were religions that had mythical tales of saviors very similar to Jesus. Such saviors were deities on earth, often had virgin births, often celebrated on Dec 25, often attended by magi, and foretold by a star[1]. There are logical reasons for stories of virgin births on December 25th (logical to ancient people, illogical to modern society)-- namely that star, sun, and moon worship was important to ancient peoples, since such heavenly objects were seen as actual supernatural beings, not just lights in the sky, and their appearance, movement, and reappearance was related to the end of winter, the rebirth of springtime and the warmth and food that comes with that, and more[11]. Ancient savior stories often had disciples; such saviors worked miracles and spoke wise parables. Most importantly such saviors were often crucified for the sins of humanity, and were resurrected from their deaths to ascend to heaven to intercede between man and God, and to judge the dead. Sound familiar?

Tales of savior-gods on earth, with virgin births, with crucifixion and resurrection from the grave, and ascension to heaven are found in virtually every culture and geographical location on earth throughout ancient history[12], [13],[14],[15],[16],[17]. Such savior myths ocured before christianity, and suggest common psychological and spiritual needs told through storytelling in all ancient cultures, for dealing with conscious and unconscious needs and fears (we must all face death, a universal fear, and we must all face the fears and quests of life). Almost every religion teaches that its God and Savior is unique, the only path to immortality, to goodness, the only Teller of what is right and wrong; thus a root cause of many cultural differences, wars and bloodshed that have plagued humanity since the dawn of history ("My god is better than your god, so let's fight over it, or over lands my God gave to my people."), and modern day terrorism[18].

Religion, and the frequent exclusiveness of its associated Savior and God, provides a means of controlling the people and of instructing and hence controlling a society's code of morals and ethics (whether they be viewed as right or wrong is moot so long as they come from a religion's god); of course along with religion often comes guilt over sin (not in all religions, but certainly in some), stress from belief in an omnipresent Voyeur watching your every move, fear of torment if you do not succeed in following the path of righteousness, and more. Without religion and savior gods, people would have to think and reason for themselves, decide on ethics and morals based on rational thinking and dialog as the great philosophers did, and value the beauty of a mortal life-- cherising loved ones knowing they are here on earth for only a short time.

Ancient savior-hero stories (and they were just stories) are found in many ancient cultures around the globe, and read very much like the christian savior-hero story of Jesus[1],[19],[20]. [Virtually every event of the gospel story of Jesus can be found in ancient religions that pre-date the era of Jesus.](#) These other stories of crucified saviors, who died for the sins of humanity, and rose from the grave to defeat death, far predate the story of Jesus; so it would be illogical to quote and use the New Testament passage warning of other Jesus saviors that would come and preach a different gospel[21].

As for Old Testament passages, their messiah prediction stories[22] are not credible if their predicted messiah never came-- and if you think the Messiah of the Old Testament prophecies did come in the form of Jesus, then take a close look at the lack of historical evidence for Jesus coupled[23] with the similarity between the story of Jesus and the savior stories listed below, then ask yourself if the story of Jesus might be just another hero-savior story like the many invented throughout history to fill the psychological needs of mankind/womankind; in addition there is an enormous amount of evidence that the Old Testament borrowed and reinvented gods and mythology from more ancient gods and myths, in order to build a Jewish national identify and theocracy[12].

Nothing Jesus said or did was original. Jesus' parables, miraculous healings, and wise sayings can be found in ancient religions, especially Hindu and Buddhist writings[24], that long pre-date the gospel. Hence Jesus' parables, healing stories, and wise sayings are plagiarized from other savior stories and wise teachers of ancient religions that predate christianity. Virgin births of a savior, disciples, working of miracles, wise parables,

crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to heaven were not unique at all to the christian gospel story, but were actually very common in ancient religions-- in ancient Egypt, ancient Sumeria, in the Polynesian islands, among the ancient Aztec and American Indians, in ancient Chinese legends, and in ancient India's folklore[1],[14],[19],[25].

It would take an entire book to detail the many ancient savior mythologies (for that consult the many references at the end of this document). Suffice it to say I will briefly mention just a few ancient saviors here to make a point. These ancient saviors predate christianity, some of which greatly predate the Jewish Old Testament stories. These are historical, archeological facts telling of ancient hero-savior mythology. Any christian simply can not ignore the evidence, and a rational mind using reason and logic simply must notice the parallels between the story of Jesus and that of more ancient saviors, and must ask whether the gospel story of Jesus is simply a reinvention of the savior myth that has permeated all of the history of human civilization.

Mithraism is perhaps one of the most likely candidates for a religion from which elements were used (along with other religions) to mold the gospel story of Jesus[1],[26],[27],[28]. Mithraism, the religion followed by those who worshipped the Sun God Mithra, originated in Persia/Iran 600 BC or earlier, and was to spread its Pagan ideas as far west as the British Isles. Throughout the centuries Mithraism morphed, changing to fit the needs of the people (most myths have several versions, as the stories were often passed along by oral tradition). In the early centuries of the christian era, Mithraism was the most wide-spread religion in the Western World, and its remains are to be found in monuments scattered around the countries of Europe, which then comprised the known civilized world[29],[30],[31]. Mithra (as the story goes) was regarded as created by, yet co-equal with, the Supreme Deity. Mithraists worshipped a Trinity, kept Sunday as their day of worship, and their chief festivals were what we know of as Christmas (Dec25) and Easter. Long before the advent of Jesus, Mithra was miraculously born on Dec 25 (winter solstice). Baptism by blood was practised among followers, as was communion and a eucharist ceremony with bread and wine. Mithra was worshipped on Sun-day, the day of the Sun God. Mithraism had the concept of a judgement day, a resurrection of the dead, and a final conflict to bring about the triumph of Light over Darkness. Mithraism had the concepts of heaven and hell. Mithraism had Pater as head of the temple; Jesus had Peter as his prime disciple and head of his church. Mithraism had clergy[32],[33],[34],[35]. Mithra was associated with the sun and Mithra was called "The Light". Mithra was considered to be the "savior of the world", conferring on his followers an eternal life in heaven. Mithra was considered to be the author of the final end of the world. Similar to the story of Jesus, Mithra died to save all others, provided that they were his followers. It was said of Mithra that "Thou has saved us also by pouring out the blood eternal." Mithra was celibate throughout life, as was Jesus. Mithra fought with righteousness against the dark forces of evil. For three centuries both religions (Mithraism and Christianity) ran parallel. Mithraism first became known to the Romans in 70 BC, when it was made the official Roman state religion. Christianity followed a century later. It wasn't until AD 377 that Christianity became sufficiently dominant to suppress its former rival (in large part due to the Roman emperor Constantine who made Christianity the official religion-- an act done for political purposes[6]), although Mithraism was to remain a formidable opponent for some time after that (a difficult task, since the Roman military and political might was vanquishing all religions other than Christianity), only slowly being forsaken by the people. It was only the absorption of many Mithraist ideas into Christianity which finally saw Mithraism's downfall.

Going back far into time (5000 BCE), thousands of years before Jesus' time, prior to the time of the Old Testament, we have ancient Egypt, and the worship of Osiris/Horus[1],[12],[36]. This is thought by some ancient mythologists and experts on comparative religion to perhaps be close the root of all religions that sprang up in the biblical lands. The Egyptians, in some of their stories of the god Osiris, have him resurrected from death, to then become the (god) King of the Dead.; this story is shown in a series of bas-reliefs on the walls of his temple at Denderah. At the temple of Luxor the birth of Horus is pictured in four scenes similar to the christian story; the infant Horus is shown to receive homage from gods and men, including three kings/magi who bring Horus gifts. A cross symbol is depicted in the scene. Egypt used a rising star in the east as a portent of a coming god. At the temple of Luxor the birth of Horus is pictured in four scenes similar to the christian story; the infant Horus is shown to receive homage from gods and men, including three kings/magi who bring Horus gifts. 2 mothers (Isis the virgin who bore him, and Nephthus who nursed him.. Pictures of Isis and her infant son Horus in her arms is common throughout the Egyptian, biblical, and mediterranean lands, long

before the Church age. Horus was one of five brothers. Son of Seb (Egyptian for Joseph). At age 12 Horus was transformed into the Son of God, only begotten of the Father in Heaven. There is no record of Horus' life from age 12-30. At age 30, Horus is baptized by the god Anup. Horus, after baptism, is transformed; a Holy Spirit is seen, represented by a bird.

Krishna (1200 BCE) presence on earth and his death were to atone for the sins of man. This Hindu god-man was crucified to appease God. He was worshipped by his disciples as God. He has often been depicted in drawings with a divine halo over his head. He has often been depicted in drawings as having a "sacred heart." The cross became a religious symbol and icon after his death. He performed miracles, including healing of the sick, curing lepers, restoring sight/sound/speech, raising the dead, and casting out demons. A book which claimed to be divinely inspired, *The Bhagavad-Gita*, told of Krishna's coming and his miraculous works. He was born of a virgin, and the mother and child were visited by shepherds. He spent a period of reflection in a desert. He was baptized in a river. He once miraculously enabled his hungry followers to catch many nets full of fish. He taught by parable and sermon. His mother was named Maia. He was said to be born on the equinox of December 25th. He had an earthly adoptive father. He proclaimed to his followers, "I am the Resurrection." He had a last supper with his disciples before being crucified. He was crucified between two thieves. He was crucified at the age of 33. He rose from the dead three days after being buried. He physically ascended into Heaven. He taught "Seek and ye shall find" He spoke of "The blind leading the blind." He regarded carnal and earthly pleasures as evil. He taught "faith can move mountains" He taught his followers to love their enemies. He prophesied his return to Earth, which he referred to as the "second coming." He taught "It is better to give than receive"^{[1],[14]}.

Legends of the Greek god Prometheus (537 BCE) came from the heavens as a god in the flesh in order to rescue humanity (as did Jesus). Interestingly, Prometheus had a close friend named Peter (Petraeus in Greek); Jesus had Peter. Prometheus' friend Peter was a fisherman, and deserted Prometheus. As with Jesus, Prometheus was known as the Logos / Word, was crucified, and rose from the dead. At the death of Prometheus, the earth shook and graves opened, and Prometheus gave up his spirit^{[1],[53]}.

Going far back in time, to 10,000 BCE, there is the savior god Zoroaster (Zarathustra) and the religion Zoroasterism that sprang from this savior god. We have a religion based on a mythical figure. Zoroaster was supposedly of divine virgin birth; baptized in water; wise; tempted by the devil; started his ministry at age 30; baptized others with water, fire and holy wind; cast demons out of people and restored sight; preached heaven and hell; brought salvation; preached of resurrection of the body, judgement, and salvation; was killed; followers had a eucharist ceremony; Zoroaster was said to be the Word made into flesh; worshipers of Zoroasterism believed in a second coming of Zoroaster bringing in a new age. Zoroasterism was all over the middle east many thousands of years prior to Judaism, the Old Testament, and tales of Jesus. Zoroaster though the middle east was the Holy Land. Zoroaster never existed, he was simply a mythical figure^{[1],[54],[55]}.

Space does not permit an exhaustive listing^[1] of the ancient savior gods here, but suffice it to say a few more will be mentioned briefly. In ancient Greece there was the Greek god Orpheus, who performed miracles, taught of eternal life, was known as the Good Shepherd, died and descended to the underworld (hell) where he returned (was resurrected) alive^[56]. Stories of the Hindu god Sakia (600BCE) tell of his being a god, and being crucified to a tree by an arrow right angles to the tree (forming a cross); Sakia was said to have left Paradise, coming to earth for the sins of humans, teaching his followers of sin and redemption; after suffering on the cross Sakia descended to Hades for three days, then was resurrected and ascended to heaven. Thammuz of Syria (1160 BCE) was also a crucified god, rising from the dead for salvation of the world. Finally, Quexalcote of Mexico (587BCE) was nailed to a cross, with some stories depicting him as crucified alongside two thieves; even church writers (in the *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Borgianus*) admit to the stories of Quexalcote, his crucifixion, death, burial, descent into hell, and resurrection on the third day.

Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) was perhaps the leading authority on the role of myth, author of many books on the subject, teacher, lecturer, and translator of ancient mythology books^[37]. (A few years ago the local Blockbuster movie rental store in my city even carried a 6 hour rental where he was interviewed by Bill Moyers about the role of myth in our history, what myth tells us about ourselves, et cetera). In one of his most popular

books, "[The Hero with a Thousand Faces](#)", [Joseph Campbell](#) elaborates on the many savior-hero stories throughout history and among varied cultures around the world, explaining how the savior-as-hero stories share common elements: virgin or miraculous birth (christian Jesus, Hindu Krishna, Buddha, Aztec Coatlicue, Tonga's Sinilau, Apache Indians, and many others), the quest for the Father, ordeals, atonement with the Father, assumption and coronation of the virgin mother, and finally the triumphant Son. Death and the defeat of Death through resurrection is another common theme among the Hero myths. Campbell's main goal in expositing on the common hero myths in history is to show how myth fills a need for our human psyche, to help use as humans struggle and overcome life and death (witness the common hero plots Hollywood uses, and many novel writers use-- they know all too well the plot device of the hero myth).

According to Campbell, the hero generally has extraordinary powers and wisdom, usually from or shortly after birth; the hero is a sent from heaven or becomes a living god, or if the hero is in fact an actual historical person then the authors of his legend make him into a larger than life figure by giving him quests into miraculous realms. During childhood, the hero faces danger, but at some point in the hero's life [s]he is visited by an angel, animal, hunter, or magical being that teaches the hero the powers of the seed (indeed, experts on ancient myth origins point to their origins out of astrotheology and agriculture which was everything to ancient peoples). After a period, the hero child's true identity is revealed, and the hero faces quests and tribulation, after which the hero is crucified or dies and is renewed and reborn or resurrected, defeating death. Thus, in the hero's journey, the hero lives out the tribulations and fears we all must face in life or in our psyche and yet the hero overcomes, showing us that it is possible for us as mortals to also overcome life, and our fear of death.

Campbell's evidence is overwhelming in his 500 page book[[19](#)] with extensive references, as he tells about one hero-savior after another through cultures around the world and throughout human history. Heros of ancient biblical lands (Jesus, Abraham), ancient Sumeria, ancient Americas, Polynesia, Celtic myths, ancient Chinese and other Asian myths, ancient India, and Africa. According to Campbell, the Hero's Journey has 12 stages.

- Ordinary World- The hero's normal world before the story begins.
- Call to Adventure - The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure.
- Refusal of the Call - The hero refuses the challenge or journey, usually because he's scared.
- Meeting with the Mentor - The hero meets a mentor to gain advice or training for the adventure.
- Crossing the First Threshold - The hero crosses leaves the ordinary world and goes into the special world.
- Tests, Allies, Enemies - The hero faces tests, meets allies, confronts enemies & learn the rules of the Special World.
- Approach - The hero has hit setbacks during tests & may need to try a new idea.
- Ordeal - The biggest life or death crisis.
- Reward - The hero has survived death, overcomes his fear and now earns the reward.
- The Road Back - The hero must return to the Ordinary World.
- Resurrection Hero - another test where the hero faces death – he has to use everything he's learned.
- Return with Elixir - The hero returns from the journey with the “elixir”, and uses it to help everyone in the Ordinary World.

Modern society has lost the ability to relate to how ancient people thought, how and why they invented myths and gods[[11](#)],[[38](#)]. This is the prime reason modern society takes ancient savior stories as true, when in fact ancient peoples invented and looked at their stories much different than we do. In his small and easily readable booklet[[2](#)] Professor Ernst Cassirer explains how language and myth developed together, each dependent on the other; he explains how primitive thought and language led to the original inventions of gods, special gods, and ultimately stories of physical and divine gods on earth.

Is the Gospel Story of Jesus Just Another Allegorical Retelling of [Astrotheology](#) [[11](#)],[[12](#)],[[14](#)],[[39](#)]? The root origin of probably all religions of the world is in ancient peoples' worship of the stars, sun and moon; to ancient people those objects were gods and angels, notions that we in the age of science laugh at of course. Examine this comparison between the elements of the Gospel Story of Jesus and those of ancient religious mythologies (predating christianity). Then ask "What is original in the gospel story?" Could it be that the gospel story of

Jesus is just yet another allegorical mythological story of a savior god, like so many such stories that came before it? A question that begs to be answered, if there is a God the Father of Jesus Christ, is why is the gospel story of Jesus based entirely on ancient savior-hero mythological elements, rather than a unique and true story? Certainly an all-powerful-all-wise God could have come up with a story having something original in it. But if a God is not behind the gospel story of Jesus, then the story of Jesus makes perfect sense in borrowing elements from ancient prior savior myths, since the gospel story served the purpose of continuing the allegorical tales of the Sun/Son-hero, of rebirth/resurrection (in the Spring, with the pouring out of blood, the lifeforce), of life (on the winter solstice Dec 25th when once again the Sun god brings more Light and life each day).

Table 1. A Comparison of the Gospel Story and Non-Gospel Elements[[12](#)],[[13](#)],[[14](#)],[[15](#)]

Gospel Story of Jesus	Ancient Mythology
Original Sin / Garden of Eden	Without original sin, without 'the fall from grace' there is no need of a savior-- hence religion's reluctance to accept the overwhelming scientific evidence for evolution. The tale of the Garden of Eden and the Fall is allegorical and mythical, found in virtually all cultures of the world, though differing in the characters and specifics; parallel mythologies are commonplace in cultures, arising from common psychological fears and needs, not because such tales actually happened. Read Joseph Campbell or J.F. Bierlein to learn more on this, or simply peruse the Mythology section of your local Barnes and Noble or Borders bookstore.
In the beginning was the Word (Logos)	Logos or Word was a concept commonplace in the ancient world, especially the Greek world where it had many connotations, including how a god created things, i.e. by speech. The Word is found in the Phonician Creed, in the tale of Heraclitus, and many other ancient religions.
Virgin birth of a Savior	Many ancient saviors were, according to their mythical stories, born of a virgin: Attis of Phrygia, Buddha, Dionysus/Bacchus, Hercules/Heraclides, Horus/Osiris of Egypt, Krishna of India, Mithra of Persia, Zoroaster/Zarathustra, and many others.
Born in a manger/cave, Star in the East	Birth of the savior in a manger/cave was common an ancient religion mythos pre-dating christianity: Adonis/Tammus, Apollo, Cybele, Demter, Herakles, Hermes, Mithra, Poseidon, etc. And the birth of ancient saviors and Kings was also often foretold by a star in the East.
Dec 25 'birthdate' celebrated	Dec 25 was a common birthdate for many saviors. Why? Because to ancient people, the Sun was God. At the winter solstice, the Sun/God 'dies' and is re'born' on the 25th of December as the Sun/God again rises, signalling life as the warmth and light of the Sun/God will soon bring Spring (crops, life, etc). The Sun is the Light of the World, the Giver of Life, in the Sun/God is no darkness.
Birth attended by wise men (magi)	The savior's birth attended by wise men (magi) was common in many ancient mythologies. They were merely allegorical, representing the three stars of Orion's belt, which 'attend' the winter solstice marked by Orion, and hence the magi stars of Orion's belt attend the birth of God (the rebirth of the Sun/God at the winter solstice).
Newborns ordered killed in order to kill the savior	The order to kill all innocent newborns in order to kill the savior is found in many ancient savior mythologies: Sargon, Nimrod, Moses, Jason, Krishna, Mordred, Jesus, Oedipus, Perseus, Romulus, Remus, Zeus.
Age 12 the savior announces his divinity	Age 12 the Son of God announces his divinity and purpose. At 12 noon, the Sun/Son/God is at its highest point, as is the temple of the Most High

and purpose	or the temple where Jesus announced his divinity. This is allegorical, and is a rehash of the ancient tale of the Egyptian sun-god Horus.
Baptism	Baptism was common the ancient world long before christianity, as far back as Egyptian mythos.
Age ~30 savior begins ministry as an adult	Age 30 the Son of God announces his purpose. At 30, the Sun/Son/God moves into a new constellation. This is allegorical, and is a rehash of the ancient tale of the Egyptian sun-god Horus, representing the Sun/God moving into a new constellation at 30 degrees; Jesus is also depicted as beginning his ministry at 28, representing the 28-day moon cycle, or one month as reckoned by the Egyptians.
Bird (dove) signals divinity of the savior	A dove appears to announce the the savior is the Son of God. This story is a repeat of the baptism of the Egyptian god Horus in the river Eridanus/Nile where the dove represents the Egyptian goddess Hathor who brings Horus forth as an adult in a ceremony symbolizing rebirth.
40 days in wilderness	Many savior gods were tempted in the wilderness: Buddha, Horus, Manu, Quetzalcoatl, Zoroaster.
Wedding Feast, water:wine	The turning of water into wine was common ancient times (priests had a device to do this to fool the people); the Gospel story of turning water into wine at Cana was modeled on a Dionysian rite of sacred marriage celebrated at Sidon, and the gospel tale wording is copied almost verbatim.
Mary Magdalene (harlot)	Mary Magdalene was not a historical character but rather is an allegorical element of the pervading ancient solar (Sun God) mythology- she was the 'sacred harlot' (of the Egyptian Triple Goddess Mari-Anna-Ishtar, the Great Whore of Babylon who was worshipped along with her savior-son in the Jerusalem temple).
Heaven and hell.	The concepts of heaven and hell, as promised or threatened by Jesus, were not of christian origin, but existed for thousands of years prior to christianity.
Holy Ghost	The concept of the Holy Ghost is not of christian origin, but existed long before christianity. In many cultures the Holy Ghost was considered female, as Sophia, Sapientia, or Hokmah.
Miracles	The working of miracles by saviors was common in ancient times. Many traveling holy men and alleged saviors worked miracles, healing the sick and the blind, etc. Honi the Righteous, and Hanini Be Dosa, resided in the biblical lands at the time of Jesus, and both were know for their paranormal powers; they healed the sick, exorcised demons, and made it rain to avert a famine. From Egypt to Rome, miraculous healings by traveling holy men were common in holy sanctuaries of Aesculap the god of healing-- sight was restored to the blind and speech to mutes, and the paralyzed were made to walk. Apollonius of Tyana was renowned as a healer almost as much as Jesus; Apollonius was born around the time of Jesus, with a birth marked by prodigious events. Apollonius taught, preached, healed, exorcised demons, performed paranormal appearances and disappearances, and resurrected the dead. Apollonius had disciples. Upon the death of Apollonius, his followers believed he would again appear, and he was deified as a god. ("Rivalling with Incipient Christianity" by C.F. Dumermuth. Asian Journal of Theology, October 2002 Volume 16 issue 2)
Sabbath as holy day	The sabbath concept pre-dates the Jewish religion; found in the middle-

	east and India where it signified the 7th day rest of the goddess Durga
Savior raises the dead (Lazarus)	Raising the dead was common in ancient times (of course it did not occur, but then science did not exist, and tales of resurrection abounded).
Casting demons out of swine	The casting of demons out of swine is an old tale-- Egyptian in origin. Seen in Egyptian scenes of the Judgement, where condemned souls are ordered back into the abyss, and the make the return passage down tot he lake of primordial matter by taking the shape of the swine.
Transfiguration on the Mount	A transfiguration on a mountain was common with many ancient savior gods (Osirus, etc).
Rides Ass into Jerusamen	The riding of an ass into the "City of Peace" or Holy City (Jerusalem) occurs in ancient mythologies. E.g. the ass is the totem animal of the Egyptian god Set (Sun-God Horus' twin brother), who rides it into the city in triumph. In the Greek mythos, Hephaistos ascends to heaven, at the instigation of Dionysus, and is depected as returning riding on an ass.
Sayings and Parables of Jesus,	The alleged sayings of Jesus are in fact the sayings of the Egyptian god Horus-- 3000 years before the christian plagiarism of Horus' sayings. The "sayings of Jesus" in Matthew 25 are plagiarized from the sayings of Horus, and even the scenery in Matthew 25-- of the Last Judgement in the Great Hall of Justice as is written in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Many of the [alleged] sayings of Jesus are also found in the Hindu religion writings (Vedas) as spoken by Krishna (the Hindu savior), by Buddha in the Dhammapada, and in the ancient Chinese writings of Lao Tzu known as the Tao Te Ching (600 BCE). Some sayings of Jesus were also derived from ancient Indian sect of Jainism (such as the parable of the prodigal son and the parable of the sower). The plagiarized sayings and plagiarized parables of Jesus alone should astonish any christian, supporting the notion that the gospel story is simply a story, stealing elements from other more ancient stories and ancient writings long predating christianity and even the Jewish Old Testament.
Wise Parables	The parables of Jesus are mostly derived from the Indian Vedas as spoken by Krishna (long before christianity) and in the Dhammapada attributed to the equally compassionate Buddha, as well as the Tao Te Ching of the Chinese sage Lao Tzu (6th century BCE).
Sermon on the Mount	The Egyptian god Horus delivered a sermon on the mount. Jesus' sermon on the mount is a patchwork of sayings found in the Old Testament, the Books of Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs.
Lord's Prayer	The Lord's Prayer is not an original oratory by Jesus, but is a collection of sayings from the Talmud (Old Testament), many of which are derived from ancient Egyptian prayers to the Egyptian savior-God Osiris.
The Last Supper (bread/wine=body/blood of savior)	The last supper or eucharist, is not of christian origin. It is a sacred ritual of many ancient religions. Jesus' statement "This is my blood you drink, this is my body you eat" is a standard part of the theophagic (god-eating) ritual of many ancient pagan religions. Now allegorical, in times past participants actually drank and ate the "god's body" which was a sacrificed human or animal. Mithraism, widespread centuries prior to christianity, had a last supper or eucharist as a standard part of its ceremony, with the same concepts of drinking blood and eating the body of the savior Mithra.
Peter the rock, head of	Peter as the Rock or Gatekeeper of Heaven is an old mythos, found in

Church	ancient mythos. In the Egyptian Book of the Dead, Petra (Peter) is the name of the divine doorkeeper of heaven. Mithraism had Pater as head of the temple. In many ancient religions, long before christianity, the chief high priest and main spokesman for the religion's savior god on earth was called "PETR" or "Peter" meaning "the rock."
30 pieces of silver, Judas' betrayal of the savior, Potter's field	The betrayal of the savior for 30 pieces of silver is not of christian origin; the sumero-babylonian goddess Aruru was worshipped as a Potter in the Jewish temple, where she received 30 pieces of silver as the price of a sacrificial victim. Aruru owed the Field of Blood, where she mixed clay with the blood of victims so bought-- hence the origin of Potter's field.
Peter's denial and cock crowing	The denial of the savior and the crowing of the cock three times is not of christian origin; this is found in other ancient pagan religions. E.g. in the Zohar it is said that a cock crowing three times is an omen of death.
Mysterious man throws off cloak and runs away naked	A mysterious man throws off his cloak and runs away naked when Jesus is arrested. This makes no sense. Except that it is also found in The Odyssey by Homer, a story that predates the gospel story. Some critics have even speculated that the entire gospel story was created by fictional writers as a story patterned on the writing models of Homer, since Homer was taught and mimicked by many.
Savior crucified for the sins of humanity	The sacrifice or crucifixion of the savior, of the sacred King, has been a story created and told throughout time, by many ancient cultures and religions. It was always understood as allegorical, representing the celestial bodies (most notably the Sun, considered to be God, which gave Life, which gave Light and Goodness) and natural forces; the sacrifice was a scapegoat ritual in which the evils of the people were placed on the head of a person or animal, often by shouting at him/it as he/it paraded the streets.
Passion	<p>The story of the passion of Jesus is not of christian origin. There have been Passions of a number of savior gods and goddesses long before Jesus. Consider the story of Baal or Bel of Babylon/Phoenicia as seen on a 4000 year-old tablet in the British museum: Baal is taken prisoner, tried in a hall of justice, tormented and mocked by a rabble, let away to a mount, taken with two other prisoners (one of whom is released), sacrificed on a mount after which the rabble goes on a rampage, his clothes are taken, he is put in a tomb, he is sought after by weeping women, he is resurrected-- appearing to his followers after the stone is rolled away from the tomb.</p> <p>The passion play is an old device used by many ancient religions, and the Passion of Jesus is easily shown to be a play through several clues: Jesus prays 3 times while his disciples sleep, so no one is there to see what happens but yet it is recorded (but in a play there is no problem since the audience hears the prayers); the whole gospel story purports to take place over a period of a few weeks, and the entire 'life' of Jesus represents about 50 hours total; the crucifixion and resurrection scenes are told as they would be depicted on a stage.</p>
Golgotha, the "Place of Skulls"	Golgotha, the "Place of Skulls", (Latin: Calvary) is not of christian origin. Many ancient pagan religions in the Middle-Eastern region had a habit of preserving skulls of the dead for later necromancy; their place of sacrifice was called Golgotha.

3 Marys at the crucifixion	The 3 Marys at the crucifixion is not of christian origin. In the ancient Egyptian mythos, the three Meris appear at Horus' crucifixion; allegorically the 3 Marys/Meris are the Moerae or fates-- they are the same pagan death priestesses myrrhophores (bearers of myrrh).
Spear of Longinus	The spear of Longinus is not of christian origin. Legend has it that Longinus was the name of the blind Roman soldier who stuck Jesus in the side with a spear, and then as cured by Jesus' blood. The prototype of this legend seems to have been the blind god Hod, who slew the Norse savior Balder with the thrust of a spear; also the Scandinavian god Odin, and the god Marsyas of Mindanao in the Philippines were hung on a "fatal tree" and stabbed with a spear. The Hindu god Vishnu (Bal-ii) was crucified with spear in his side. The gods Wittba and Adonis were also crucified and "side-wounded" saviors.
"My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me!"	"My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?" is not of christian origin. Part of pagan mythos pre-dating Jesus, such as the sacrifice of Aleyin by his Virgin Mother Anath, twin of the Goddess Mari as Lad of Birth and Death, worshipped by Canaanites, Amorites, Syrians, Egyptians, and Hebrews. Like Jesus, Aleyin was the Lamb of God and said "I am Aleyin, son of Baal (Lord/God). Make ready then, the sacrifice. I am the Lamb which is made ready with pure wheat to be sacrificed in expiation." After Aleyin's death and resurrection by Anath, she told him that he was forsaken by his heavenly father El. "My El, My El, why hast thou forsaken me?" was apparently copied from the ancient liturgical formula.
The rending (tearing) of the curtain temple	The rending (tearing) of the curtain temple when Jesus gave up his spirit is not of christian origin. This event is found in several pagan mythos. In the Egyptian version, Horus rends the curtain of veil of the Egyptian tabernacle or temple, which means that in his resurrection he removes the mummified remains of his old self as Osiris, and the new Sun/God is born or resurrected from the old dead one.
Darkening of the sun	The darkening of the sun at the crucifixion is not of christian origin. No historian ever wrote about this extraordinary event. But this event was a part of the death of other mythical saviors-- Heracles/Hercules, Krishna, Prometheus, and Osiris. Such a darkening of the Son/Sun/God is only natural since when the sun/God is 'crucified' it goes out.
Savior in tomb for 3 days/nights	In the many ancient savior-crucified-resurrection myths, being buried or in a tomb for 3 days/nights is common.
Savior rises from dead	Resurrection of a savior from the dead is not of christian origin. In fact it was a common event of ancient religious mythos. Numerous gods and goddesses throughout history have been depicted as being resurrected (Tammuz, Osiris/Horus, Prometheus, Mithra, Krishna, etc.)
Mount of Olives Ascension	The ascension on the mount of olives is not of christian origin. The mount of olives as Egyptian was the mountain of Amenta; it is termed "Mount Bakhu", "the mount of the olive-tree". Mount Bakhu, the mount of the olive tree, was the way of ascent to the risen [Egyptian] Savior as he issued forth from Amenta to the land of the spirtis in heaven.
Alpha and Omega	Jesus as the "Alpha and Omega" is stolen from older sources, including the Egyptian goddess Isis in whose temple at Sais, Egypt it was carved "I am all that has been, that is, and that will be."
The concept of the	The trinity is a ubiquitous mythos found in many ancient religions prior

Trinity	to christianity; originally found in ancient Egyptian religion, also found in ancient Indian religion
Lucifer / Satan	Lucifer is a pre-Hebraic, found in Canaan, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. Not unique to Judeo-Christianity.
Second Coming, Day of Judgement	A second coming and a day of judgement are both pre-christian concepts, expected of several savior gods: Krishna, Buddha, Bacchus, Quetzalcoatl, Zoroaster, etc.

The evidence is scant to non-existent that Jesus of Nazareth even existed as a real historical person. If Jesus *had* existed as a real historical person, couldn't an all powerful God have allowed the preservation of an accurate and incontrovertible record of Jesus' existence? Or is God a trickster. No ancient historians of Jesus' time ever witnessed and then wrote about Jesus; there were some 40 historians of the biblical regions who wrote during the first and second centuries including Plutarch and Philo, and none of them wrote about Jesus Christ[40]. Here are some ancient writers who wrote at or within a century of the alleged Jesus, yet *none* of them ever mentions Jesus in *any* of their writings: Arrian, Petronius, Seneca, Dion Pruseus, Pliny the Elder, Appian, Juvenal, Theon of Smyrna, Martial, Plutarch, Apollonius, Pausanias, Valerius Flaccus, Florus Lucius, Quintilian, Favorinus, Lucanus, Damis, Silius Italicus, Aulus Gellius, Statius, Columella, Ptolemy, Dio Chrysostom, Hermogeones, Lysias, and Valerius Maximus. Philo and Justus of Tiberias were Jewish historians that lived at the same time Jesus allegedly lived (Justus even lived in Capernaum where Jesus supposedly often stayed), and yet neither mentions anything about Jesus in their many historical records of the events of the time.

Those Christians who think there is historical evidence of Christ's physical existence generally rely on the following sources:

- The Gospels. The problem with using the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) as evidence of Jesus' existence as a real person is that that involves circular reasoning. To say a character in a story is true because the story says it is so is circular logic and thus without merit. This is similar to saying that the young girl Alice really existed because the story Alice in Wonderland says she existed, and because the story details her adventures down the rabbit hole. What is needed is credible, unbiased evidence outside of the story itself.
- Early Church writers. Unfortunately this involves a rather biased group of writers, who neither met nor witnessed Jesus in the flesh. Such writers simply believed in a Jesus story, and thus believed that he existed. Or not; perhaps they invented a synthetic physical Jesus story to further their agendas which we can only guess at. Again, biased authors are not a credible form of objective evidence.
- Martyrs. All religions have had martyrs. A person can sincerely believe in something, even if it is false, and even die for that belief. History has shown this repeatedly. Martyrism as part of christianity has been overestimated[41], [42].
- Josephus Flavius, Jewish historian (circa 37-95CE): A [passage in the historical writings of JF](#) mentions Jesus[43], but this passage is considered a forgery by even many christian apologists. The passage mentioning Jesus is believed to have been added to Josephus' writings by each Church bishop Eusebius. Josephus was alive when Jesus supposedly lived, and yet nothing is mentioned about Jesus Christ by Josephus except for perhaps one forged passage (the original passage does not exist, and no christian writers prior to Eusebius ever quote the alleged Josephus Flavius passage). At most we have a controversial passage by one of many historians living at the time of Jesus, which may or may not be a forgery; certainly an almighty god could have kept the original passage about his Son intact so that mere mortals would not have to rely on forged copies.

- Pliny the Younger (circa 62-113CE): An alleged letter by the Roman historian Pliny to Trajan once mentions "Christians"[44]. The word Christians may have been changed from the word Essenes during the many revisions and copies of the letter. At most, there is a secondhand reference to Christians, only showing that a group of people called Christians existed that were following the christian belief system. No mention of Jesus Christ is in the letter. The existence of Christians is not disputed, only the object of their worship.
- Tacitus (circa 55-120CE): The historian Tacitus lived two decades after the alleged death of Christ, so anything Tacitus wrote of Christ was secondhand and very postdated. Tacitus mentions Christians being persecuted under the Roman Emperor Nero[45]; but this passage is considered by many to be a forgery, since it was never mentioned by the zealous defender of Christianity Bishop Eusebius, and no other christian writer mentions it prior to the fifteenth century. Tacitus writes about the great fire of Rome in 64 CE, in which he recounts how the roman emperor Nero blamed the Christians and that "Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate." Tacitus called Pilate the "procurator" of Judea when in fact Pilate was the "prefect", so clearly Tacitus is stating hearsay information, not the information of Roman records; the Romans kept copious records of their legal proceedings, yet nothing is to be found in them of any such Christ being executed in Judea by Pontius Pilate.
- Suetonius (circa 69-140CE): A single passage from the Roman historian Suetonius mentions someone named "Chrestus" or "Chrestos" at Rome [46]. Jesus Christ was never at Rome, so it is highly unlikely Suetonius refers to Christ. The title "Chrestus" or "Chrestos" was also a common title (meaning good/useful) used by freed slaves and various pagan gods. Suetonius' mention of a Chrestos is hardly evidence of the existence of Jesus Christ.
- The Jewish Talmud (circa 200CE): Written long after the supposed gospel story, the Jewish Talmud does mention a "Yeshu the Nazarene". But Yeshu is short for "Yehoshua" or "Joshua" which is Greek becomes "Jesus", a very common name (like Brad or Robert today); Jesus was a common name of the time. Unless Jesus of Nazareth is named, we have a reference to a common name. And the Nazarenes were a jewish sect and Nazarene did not mean Nazareth (a town).

Surprisingly, the early Church founders, and the [other] gospels themselves, provide evidence that Jesus was simply another retelling of ancient savior myths. Gospel stories were circulating in the days of the same gospel stories we now see in the New Testament, but were denounced by the early Church bishops because such gospels argued against the historicity of real, historical, physically killed and resurrected Jesus. These other gospels speak of either a spiritual non-physical Jesus, or simply a human Jesus who was not resurrected. The early Church bishops and writers themselves admitted to such early gospel teachings in their writings, and even sometimes admitted to the absurdity of a real historical Jesus, claiming they believed the fantastical tale of Jesus simply because it was so fantastical.

Saint Augustine, the eminent early Church leader, himself admitted "That which is known as the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist", i.e. that christianity is simply a retelling of the ancient savior mythologies that have always existed among civilizations. The Christian Father Justin Martyr (c. 100-165 CE) even admitted that christianity offered nothing new that did not exist in ancient pagan religions. In Justin Martyr's First Apology and his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Justin Martyr admits to similarities between Christianity and the many ancient savior gods; he admits to virgin births, of miraculous healings, and deaths and resurrections, of other savior gods outside of christianity (e.g. Justin admits to Hercules' virgin birth, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. Justin admits to Perseus' virgin birth, and how Aesculapius raised the dead and did miraculous healings and imitated the prophecies about Christ). Lactantius (240-330 CE), an early Church writer, wrote, so as to convince the pagan elite to convert to christianity, about how the ancient pagan savior-god stories were proof that christianity was a valid religion, since christianity was thus as valid as those religions[12].

It is thus doubtful that a physical Jesus existed, since the story of Jesus seems to fit in with the many similar

mythical stories that have permeated human mythology since the times of ancient civilization. But consider that perhaps a real person named Jesus existed as described in the gospels (The name Jesus, or Joshua, was common in ancient times, so we are considering the possibility of Jesus of Nazareth as told in the gospels). We have no eyewitness of a resurrected Jesus Christ to put in the witness stand and interrogate and ask of the facts. We only have a *story* (the Book of Acts in the bible) that *claims* there were 500 eyewitnesses, but we have no names of these eyewitnesses-- the story might just as well have said there were 500,000 witnesses. A story can claim anything-- especially in a time when people were superstitious, had no knowledge of science, did have beliefs in gods and demons, and were the majority were illiterate and highly influenced by religious leaders. Do we believe a talking rabbit existed, simply because the story Alice in Wonderland describes such a thing? Do we believe Gandalf existed, died, and was resurrected from death, simply because a story ("The Lord of the Rings") exists with many witnesses in that story attesting to Gandalf's existence, deeds, death, and resurrection? Gandalf is a fictional character in a story, was resurrected only in a story, and so were the many savior-heroes of the many savior-hero stories that exist, including the story of Jesus. Is the world supposed to base its belief on a risen Christ (the entire basis of Christianity) on a *story* written by *one* person (Paul) as well as other stories with anonymous authorship? What rational god would expect the world to be so gullible? For a great discussion of the implausibility of a resurrected Christ, read [Richard Carrier's essay "Why I don't buy the Resurrection Story"](#) [4].

Another alleged piece of evidence for a risen Savior offered by some is the growth and spread of Christianity, as well as martyrs who died for their faith in a risen Christ. Problems with such evidence are that many other religious faiths have grown around the world throughout history, faiths based on mythological saviors and gods; also, the power of the Roman Empire helped greatly with the growth of Christianity[6] (once Rome decided to make Christianity its official religion, declaring all of Rome to be Christian, and persecuting those not converting to Christianity), as the power of the Roman military empire helped squash other religions; and as the [Roman] Church grew in power, it forced belief and worship of the christian faith up on non-believers and believers of other gods and saviours (and if one did not change one's belief-- forsaking Mithra or other non-christian saviors and gods--, one risked painful torture and death of oneself and one's family). As for martyrs, all faiths throughout history have had martyrs-- merely dying for an object of belief does not mean that object was real, or true. Yes there were christian martyrs, as there were with all faiths, but the numbers and extent of christian martyrism is greatly exaggerated[41],[42].

But doesn't Jesus answer prayer? Such a claim, if true, would provide evidence that perhaps a netherworldly Jesus exists. I would urge the reader to read the article ["Answers to Prayer" by Lee Salisbury](#) [47]. Also noteworthy is a recently funded \$2 million dollar comprehensive scientific study by the Templeton foundation, looking at the effect of prayer on almost two thousand cardiac patients. Church members prayed for half the patients just before they went into surgery; there was no statistically significant difference in the outcome of the cardiac patients who were prayed for compared to those who did not receive prayer. Prayer had no effect[48].

Some might argue that Jesus must have existed because of the many miracles he performed. We have no credible evidence any miracles actually were done, outside of the stories of Jesus which might just be stories. Tales of supernatural events are common, both in the ancient world, in childhood stories ("Alice in Wonderland", Gandalf in "Lord of the Rings"), and in modern cinematography ("Star Wars"). Two recommended readings on the subject of miracles are [Examining Miracles](#) [49] and [Science and Miracles](#) [50]. To better understand miracles, one needs to do some time travelling from today's age of education and scientific literacy to the ancient biblical days when literacy was almost unheard of and science was yet to be known far into the future. Miracles (alleged) and resurrections were *common* in biblical days. Honi the Righteous, and Hanini Be Dosa, resided in the biblical lands at the time of Jesus, and both were known for their paranormal powers; they healed the sick, exorcised demons, and made it rain to avert a famine; from Egypt to Rome, miraculous healings by traveling holy men were common in holy sanctuaries of Aesculap the god of healing-- sight was restored to the blind and speech to mutes, and the paralyzed were made to walk; Apollonius of Tyana was renowned as a healer almost as much as Jesus, was born around the time of Jesus with a birth marked by prodigious events, taught, preached, healed, exorcised demons, performed paranormal appearances and disappearances, and resurrected the dead, had disciples, and upon his death his followers believed he would again appear, and he was deified as a god[28].

It is sometimes claimed that certain archeological findings are proof the bible is the word of God, and hence that the gospel stories of Jesus are true (that the bible is the word of God is difficult to believe considering the abundance of errors, atrocities, and absurdities found in the bible [51]). It is not disputed that some of the biblical places and people existed-- that is normal in mythology, and in fiction stories. What is disputed are the fantastical story elements of such stories and the religion that formed around such natural places and people. Archeology discovered the ancient city of Troy where Homer indicated it would be-- and Homer's city of Troy was thought to be an utter fiction before that find. The discovery of Troy indicates that Homer's story had *some* factual basis, but it does *not* prove that the Greek gods that Homer wrote about really truly existed. No one doubts that the ancient biblical civilizations existed, had a religion and had names for their gods, had customs and traditions, and had their creation stories. Archaeological evidence of story elements is *not* evidence of the reality of gods founds in stories, any more than the ruins of Troy are evidence of Greeks gods being real.

- Discovery of the Nuzi Tablets (1925) – Said to confirm numerous Old Testament customs and practices. Mere confirmation of Old Testament (OT) customs and practices does not mean that the alleged supernatural story elements of the OT are true. Many or most fiction novels use names of real cities, real countries, real places, sometimes names of real people, and then build embellished fictional stories and characters around them. Tolstoy's "War and Peace" of course incorporated real historical places and even some real events and even real names of real political leaders; but do we believe Tolstoy's main characters were real people, that the plot events actually happened? Of course not.
- Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947) – Said to confirm the accuracy of the Hebrew text of Scripture. The Dead Sea Scrolls are simply copies of the Hebrew Old Testament. Fewer than 1/3 of the Dead Sea Scrolls are made up of biblical texts, containing all the books of the Hebrew Bible in whole or in part, except for Esther. About 1/4 are writings (known and unknown) which were part of the Jewish literary heritage that remained outside the Bible, such as apocryphal books like the Testament of Levi. A third are writings which pertain to the specific beliefs, practices, and membership requirements of a Jewish sect, headquartered at Qumran. An eighth of the fragments are unidentified. Many documents are found in multiple copies, with Isaiah and Psalms appearing most frequently. That the Scrolls confirm the Old Testament words is not denied; but the Dead Sea Scrolls do not in themselves confirm the historicity of the fantastical tales and gods of the bible, alleged miracles, and alleged prophecies of the bible.
- Discovery of the Ebla Tablets (1975) – Said to confirm various biblical events and names. The Ebla tablets include the names of some cities and have names resembling some people that appear in the Old Testament; they provide no more evidence for the supernatural claims of the bible than do the Nuzi tablets. The tablets likely also name cities that are part of the many cult religions of the ancient world, so there is just as much reason to believe in all the other pagan religions as for that of the Old Testament. Do we believe the legendary stories of Zeus, Apollo, Hercules, and Prometheus, even when archeological evidence shows that cities and places told in such Greek mythological stories actually existed? Do we believe Camelot existed, just because we can read a story about King Arthur that cites actual regions of England that do exist? Of course not. Historical places easily provide frameworks for embellished religious tales that ancient cultures created as part of their national mythos for cultural and spiritual identity. Some well-known Semitic deities appear in the Ebla tablets-- Dagan, Ishtar, Resheph, Kanish, Hadad, and some otherwise unknown ones (Kura, Nidakul), plus a few Sumerian gods (Enki and Ninki) and Hurrian gods (Ashtapi, Hapat, Ishara)-- are we to believe they are real? Of course not, so just mentioning gods and supernatural events in some ancient tablets does not make them real, only shows what ancient superstitious peoples believe in times long past when science did not exist.
- Discovery of a silver amulet in Jerusalem with the name "YAHWEH" on it (1980) – Said to be the first time the tetragrammaton has been found in an archaeological excavation. Only shows that people kept icons of mythical gods they worshipped in ancient times (and still today).
- Alleged discovery of a piece of Pharoh's chariots and skeletons of Pharoh's men on the bottom of the Red Sea, and the Ark of the Covenant. This, and other fantastical alleged archeological findings, are

sometimes claimed by certain Christians. Such evidence was supposedly uncovered by an archeologist named Ron Wyatt. He was not an archeologist at all, but a nurse. None of his alleged findings, which would have been of great archeological importance, have ever been displayed in museums, nor published or cited in academic scholarly (peer reviewed) journals.

So in summary, why does the mythical tale of a crucified savior appeal to many? Assuming the tale true, you have a story of a supernatural God visiting us mere mortals and suffering for us, a human God-person who is compassionate, healing the sick, able to perform miracles, able to speak wise parables and teach us His code of ethics and morality, and who deserves our compassion and belief for suffering so by flogging and crucifixion. Add to this a promise of bliss and eternal life as a gift (but also a threat you will burn in hell for eternity if you do not believe in Him), and he seems to prove his promises and divinity through his miracles and parables and by defeating death and ascending to heaven. A virgin birth foretold by a star in the sky, magi, disciples, miracles, parables, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension to heaven, a Last Supper with bread and wine sacraments-- very appealing to take the dullness out of our normal lives; but as you have learned in this document, everything written in this paragraph thus far belongs to stories of any of a number of ancient hero-saviors (many crucified and resurrected from death) that occurred long before Christianity, from all around the world. The gospel story thus may simply have been retold as yet one more crucified savior story with the characters' names and the location and time in history changed.

Religions certainly bring out the emotions in their followers, and lead to intense prayer as well as martyrdom. But since every religion produces such emotions, prayer devotion, claims of answered prayers, and martyrdom, obviously something is wrong because every religion claims its God and Savior as the only God and Savior. Every religion claims its God and only its God answers the prayers of its followers. Every religions' followers are intensely emotional and intensely faithful towards their God and Savior. Arguments for Christianity's exclusiveness to salvation based on emotional conversions, answers to prayer, and feelings certainly can not hold much weight.

The gospel message of Jesus-- what a great deal! Or is it? What if it is all a fictional story, a retelling of a fictional story that has existed throughout all of history? What then? What is the downside to not believing it? Unbelievers suffer eternity in hell if the story actually is real-- but *maybe* it is not. What is there to lose by believing the gospel? This question of *fire-insurance* is known as [Pascal's wager](#), and indeed there is a downside to believing the gospel if the gospel may not be true. You might be worshipping the wrong savior; you might waste your life worshipping the wrong God and still go to a hell; you might waste much of your life in worship when you might have simply been a great humanitarian, while enjoying life a bit more as you realize your ephemeral existence.

Not believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ, if the evidence points you in that direction, does not mean you are an atheist, or even an agnostic; it simply means you do not believe the *christian* savior story. You might still choose to believe in God, or some other messiah or savior. Keep an open mind, think rationally[52], use the power of reason that your brain has (from evolution or God, whichever you choose to believe), and see where the evidence leads you.

References

- [1] [Sixteen Crucified Saviors](#) by Kersey Graves (book).
- [2] [Language and Myth](#) by Ernst Cassirer. (book) 1946. Dover Publications, New York
- [3] For the Vita Genofevae see the translation of the earliest mss. ("Text A") in [Sainted Women of the Dark Ages](#) by Jo Ann McNamara and John Halborg, 1992, pp. 17 ff. Their introduction gives background and further sources. See also [The Oxford Dictionary of the christian Church](#), 3rd ed., s.v. "Geneviève" for more sources.

Only a few of the most incredible of her miracles are mentioned by the quoted passage of Richard Carrier--by section number, cf. monsters: 34; righted ships: 39; exorcisms: 44-47, etc.; calmed storms: 50; oil: 51; water: 19; healings: 20, 32, 36, etc.; blinded thieves: 23, 33, etc.

[4] [Why I don't buy the Resurrection Story](#) by [Richard Carrier](#) (essay)

[5] [Nag Hammadi](#) library of other gospel stories not included in the New Testament.

[6] [Roman Emperor Constantine's influence on the growth of Christianity](#)

[7] Plato 428 B.C. - 348 B.C. Disciple of Socrates - recorded discourses of Socrates in works called dialogues. His best known work is called The Republic - where he presents a perfect state led by enlightened rulers. Best known for his doctrine of ideas - that ideas have a higher degree of reality than material things. Aristotle 384 B.C. - 322 B.C. Disciple of Plato. He broke with Plato when he rejected the doctrines of innate knowledge and ideas. He taught that all knowledge begins in sense experience, while not denying the ability of the intellect to move beyond this level. Author of many works in almost all areas of knowledge. Author of The Nicomachean Ethics and The Politics. Epictetus 60 A.D. - 117 Greek philosopher who followed the Stoic school. He began as a slave, but was freed. He was lame. Although not a Christian himself, his writings were admired by early Christians with their recommendation that we accept what fate brings us without being disturbed within ourselves. Lao Tzu 6th Century BCE. Founder of the philosophy of Taoism. Taoist philosophy is essentially summed up as "To regard the fundamental as the essence, to regard things as coarse, to regard accumulation as deficiency, and to dwell quietly alone with the spiritual and the intelligent -- herein lie the techniques of Tao of the ancients." (Chuang Tzu).

[8] Hell and Torment preached by Jesus. Here are some sample verses from the bible: "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 13:42). "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt 25:41). And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched." (Mark 9:43-48).

[9] [Morality and Atheism](#) <http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/nontheism/atheism/morality-and-atheism.html>

[10] [The Dark Side of Christian History](#) by Helen Ellerbe.

[11] [Astrotheology](#) of ancient people.

[12] [The Christ Conspiracy- The Greatest Story Ever Sold](#) by Acharya S. (book) 1999.

[13] Secrets of the Code -- The Unauthorized Guide to the Mysteries Behind the Da Vinci Code by Dan Burstein (book). NY Times Bestseller.

[14] [Suns of God--Krishna, Buddha, and Christ Unveiled](#) by Acharya S. (book) 2004.

[15] [The Jesus Mysteries-- Was the Original Jesus a Pagan God?](#) by Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy (book) 1999.

[16] Christianity Before Christ by John G. Jackson (book)

[17] Mithraism p580-582, The Encyclopedia of Religion, Mircea Eliade editor in chief. 1995. Simon & Schuster Macmillan.

[18] The End of Faith -- Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason by Sam Harris (book) 2004. NY Times Bestseller.

[19] [The Hero with a Thousand Faces](#) by [Joseph Campbell](#)

- [20] Parallel Myths -- A Fascinating Look at the Common Threads Woven Through the World's Greatest Myths, and the Central Role they Have Played Through Time by J.F. Bierlein (book) 1994.
- [21] "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (New Testament, 2nd Corinthians 11:1-4).
- [22] OT passages predicting Messiah: <http://www.bible-prophecy.com/otprophecies.htm>
- [23] [*Christ a Fiction*](#) by Robert Price (essay)
- [24] Hindu, Buddhist writings and alleged sayings of Jesus:
<http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ncs/newsarch/1998/Mar98/jesusbud.htm>
<http://users.cyberone.com.au/myers/buddhism.html>
[*Jesus and Buddha, the Parallel Sayings*](#) (book)
- [25] Universal Myths -- heroes, Gods, Tricksters, and Others by Alexander Eliot (book)
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- [31] The Competition by Everett Ferguson. Christian History. 1998. Volume 17 Issue 1.
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- [33] Les mysteres de Mithra (Translated as The Mysteries of Mithra) by Franz Cumont. Brussels. 1913
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- [35] The Ancient Mysteries -- A Sourcebook of Sacred Texts by Marvin W. Meyer, editor. (book)
- [36] Osiris and Horus-- Egyptian origin of Jesus savior myth?
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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horus>
- [37] Joseph Campbell. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Campbell
- [38] Why people invent myths.
<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&lr=&q=mythology+origins&btnG=Search>
<http://members.cox.net/deleyd/religion/index.ht>

- [39] Solar-savior mythology
<http://members.cox.net/deleyd/religion/index.htm>
- [40] Ancient historians-- none wrote about Jesus
<http://www.atheists.org/christianity/didjesusexist.html>
<http://www.nobeliefs.com/exist.htm>
- [41] Martyrs on Wikipedia. In fact, many or most martyrs of christianity were tortured and killed by others of the christian faith.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_martyrs
- [42] Persecution of Christians on Wikipedia.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Christians
- [43] Josephus passage, Testamonium Flavum
http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/scott_oser/hojfaq.html
- [44] Pliny the Younger's letter to Trajan mentions christians.
http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/scott_oser/hojfaq.html
- [45] Tacitus mentions christian persecution...
http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/scott_oser/hojfaq.html
- [46] Seutonius' passage mentioning Chrestus at Rome.
http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/scott_oser/hojfaq.html
- [47] [Answers to Prayer by Lee Salisbury \(essay\)](#).
- [48] \$2 million dollar scientific study showed prayer did not help cardiac surgery patients.
http://www.templeton.org/spirituality_and_health/step.asp
- [49] [Science and Miracles](#) by Theodore Drange (essay)
- [50] [Examining Miracles](#) (article) by Joe Nickell
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"If you have walked all these days with closed ears and mind asleep, wake up now!" -- Gandalf